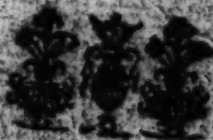


AN *July. p. 105* *2*
A N S W E R
TO
A Letter of ENQUIRY
INTO
The Grounds and Occasions
OF THE
C O N T E M P T
OF THE
Clergy.

*By John Skelton, sometime Fellow of
Jesus College in Oxford*



L O N D O N,

Printed for Nath. Kew, and J. Baskin, at
the Kings Arms in St. Pauls Church-yard, 1671.

A NEW

A Letter of Enquiry

of the
The Grounds and Occasions

CONTEMP

Clergy.

70,5914



LONDON.

Printed for Wm. Lewis, and J. Debenham, at
the Angel in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1771.



THE
P R E F A C E
TO THE
Reader.



IF I were not so
Civil to you as
the Gentleman
Answer, and did
not Court you
with a Preface,
you would have little to wonder
at; for if you believe the Cha-
racter which he is pleased to give
of men of our Profession to be
true: What can be expected
from such an ungentle sort of
men,

AN
R N S W E R

A Letter of Inquiry

to the Clergy and Laity

OF THE

COMMUNITARIAN

Clergy

70,5914



LONDON

Printed by J. A. H. [illegible] and J. A. H. [illegible]
at the [illegible] Press, [illegible]



THE
P R E F A C E
TO THE
Reader.

IF I were not so
Civil to you as
the Gentleman I
Answer, and did
not Court you
with a Préface,
you would have little to wonder
at; for if you believe the Cha-
racter which he is pleased to give
of men of our Profession to be
true: What can be expected
from such an ungentile sort of
men,

The Preface

men, whose Education and Improvements are so pitifully poor and mean? How should we be instructed in what belongs to good manners, who are so unmannerly in the Pulpit? where if any where, it is to be presum'd we dress up our Discourses in their Holiday Apparel, and deliver our selves in the best Language that we have. And if that be so blunt and despicable, there is no great reason to hope, that elsewhere we shall better approve our selves.

I know not in how many of our Studies, the Gentleman might finde Licoſthenes and the second part of Wits Commonwealth, (glad am I that I have none of them,

to the Reader.

them, and so that frump does not reach me) by the help of which he supposes we make our Sermons : But I dare be bold to believe, he shall finde the Academy of Complements in very few ; nor any such choice Books, whereby we may render the Prefaces to the Books, which any of us are bold to put out, less ridiculous, than he presumes the Prefaces we make to our Sermons are.

But Kinde, and Courteous and Gentle Readers (so I finde you have been called) I hope you have a better opinion of us ; if not, I must needs pray you, out of pity to us to have as good an opinion of us you can. I am not

The Preface

so foolish as to boast, that if you will read over what I have written, you will finde the Gentleman mistaken very much, and that he does us a great deal of wrong, and that we are as good men as himself, and that we have reason to quarrel with the world, because we are no more admir'd and honour'd, or any the like things: But honestly and plainly give me leave to say what in good earnest induced me, to undertake what I have performed, viz. a Contemplation of such things as follow.

First, I consider the Serviceableness of the Clergy does much, very much depend upon the Credit and Esteem that we can have
in

to the Reader.

in the world. Where we meet
with any so good natur'd as to
bear any good Respect toward
us, though it be rather for the
Honourableness of our Employ-
ment, than for any Worthiness
they can discern in our Persons;
this favourable Opinion they
have of us, will greatly dispose
them, the more readily to receive
the Instructions we follow them
with. But they who are preju-
diced at us, and entertain any
vile thoughts of us, will very
hardly be perswaded by us. It
was not because Micaiah's Pro-
phesie was more unlikely than Ze-
dekiah's, but because Ahab had
afore conceiv'd hatred against
him, that he would not yield to
a 4 him

The Preface

him. Wherefore it concerns us to study what we can to preserve our Credit. The Gentleman hath done well in joyning our Credit and Serviceableness together, it being undoubtedly true, that the same thing which lessens our Value, will obstruct our Serviceableness.

Now it seems to me, (and I have given a farther Account of it) that the Letter I enquire into, will probably do us this unkindness, to make us more obnoxious and contemptible than yet we are. The Style and manner of it is enough to provoke willing Readers to make us their Table-talk, not in order to our amendment, but to our farther dis-

to the Reader.

disgrace. There are many of our Countrey Neighbours, who seldom or never see any Playes: But I fancy this Letter looks like such a piece of merriment sent among them into the Countrey. And possibly it hath been accounted none of the most unfavoury Sawces to their late Christmas Chear, even the Discourse that hath been created by this Letter among those who have read it. Wherefore that that little Service which we are yet able to do among our people may not come to none at all, I have adventur'd to enquire, whether a great part of our Contempt be not undeserved.

I consider moreover, that it cannot

The Preface

cannot be reasonably said, This is but an Innocent Piece of Mirth, and such as cannot without peevishness be quarrell'd at. Or, there is a great deal of Truth in it, and that which is not true may be born with, supposing the Design be to make us more wary for the time to come. This may be said, and to this it may be replied: That all things which are true, are not fit to be said at all times. I know those that have been upbraided as lukewarm men, and betrayers of the Truth, &c. who have declar'd themselves to be of this opinion, that some Truths may sometimes for peace sake be conceal'd. But it is not onely true, but a truth of great

to the Reader.

great Import in order to the good
of the *World*. And if for that,
then also for other reasons. *Cui*
bono is a right good question for
any man to propound to himself
in all he undertakes. So that if
all were true, unless the Author
could probably think he might do
some good Service to the Church
in this Essay, he had better have
been cracking of Nuts all the
while, they would not so much
have hurt his teeth, as his teeth
have hurt us. But if he did so
think, (for if I know him at all,
I know him to be an honest Gen-
tleman) it may not be labour lost
to discover how unsuccessful his
Design is like to prove as to any
good Ends.

Yea again, if all were true, yet
the

The Preface

the manner of it is somewhat unkindly and unhopeful. Who of us is like to be much the better for this kinde of dealing? and who among those that despise us, will be cured of that Humour by any thing he shall finde in the Letter?

But when I farther consider that all is not true, that we are not so contemptible as is represented; I thought it fitting to say what I thought might be said in our Defence. They have a Proverb, that if you tread but upon a worm, it will turn again, (though in truth there is little design in that creature) And wherein are we worse than Worms, that it should not be lawful

to the Reader.

lawful for us to labour our own Vindication?

So then, that I have propounded a good end to my self, I am sufficiently confident. If there be any thing wherein I am to beg the Readers pardon, and to fear their Censure, it is in this, that I did not let this Task alone to be perform'd by some better hand. It may be some of the Learned Clergy will be so tender of the Reputation of their meaner Brethren, as to take the Gentleman to task. It may be a nimbler Pen and a readier Wit than mine, will concern themselves in this Affair. It may be so, but it is more than I know of. And therefore what I have done is like my self, that
is

The Preface

is like one who is out of the world of Books, who do so little know what Books are coming out this next Term, that I know but few of those that are already extant. It may be also I have betray'd my self to be one who little understands the temper of the World; and if I could imagine that what I have written would be so little enquir'd after, and so meanly thought of, as very possibly it may be; I would have thought it enough to suffer the Contempt under which (together with the rest of our Order) I already am, rather than by my Indiscretions have made the Case still worse. Be it as it will, I look for but little Credit,
and

to the Reader.

and I fear no great Discredit.

But I must not forget, that a little Preface is big enough for a little Book: Wherefore I forbear to tell my Reader how unexpectedly I have been diverted since I first intended any thing in this kinde; and what other things I have to say in excuse, why I have no more lickt it over. I have this onely to say; I thought it would please the Stationer to have it exposed to Sale this next Tearm: Therefore I have made haste, and I wish it be no more haste than good speed.

An



BY reason of the Authours great distance
from the Press, 'tis likely some Faults
are slipt uncorrected, for which the Printer
craves the Readers pardon.





*An Answer to a Letter of En-
quiry into the Grounds and
Occasions of the Contempt of
the CLERGY.*

S I R,

THat the Clergy of *England* are un-
happily despised, either you do
truly believe, and affectionately be-
wail, or you do very yainly, if not hypocri-
tically too; enquire into the Grounds and
Occasions of that Contempt. I do readily
believe, (notwithstanding your frequent
Drollings which might tempt some severe
mento doubt) that you are in good earnest;
and I am so well perswaded of the truth of
many things you say, that one design of
what follows, is to adde acknowledgements
in confirmation of them: But whether in all
things you have said well, may deserve to be
farther enquired into. I say may deserve it;
but to say whether or no it do deserve it, is

great



great boldness in one, who for several years hath had no higher Title than that of a *Countrey Vicar*. If we *Countrey Ministers* be but half so ignorant as you suppose, it cannot be less then presumptuous Arrogance, for any of us to make a Judgement upon a Discourse so Ingenious and Learned as you have blest the world with. Yet because there is a certain Scribbling Humour possesse some men, with which I am now infected, I beg your leave to animadvert upon some Passages in your *Letter*; yet always *premissing*, (which is you know an old wont in our *Preachments*) that I shall endeavour to speak with that modesty, which becomes a poor ignorant *Countrey Minister*; not presuming to determine too resolutely, but onely a little to enquire into some things, which may possibly be true, if I had Understanding enough to discern the truth of them.

You seem, Sir, to abuse us for *dividing* our *Texts*, and you may with as much reason laugh at my *shredding* a *Letter*. But every man in his own way. We have been used for the helping of our dull Understandings and weak Memories, to cast our thoughts into some certain Method; and if besides this, now and then a little *Pulpit Language* and phrase creep into a *Letter*, you will pardon

pardon a man that does not *recedere ab arte sua*. Wherefore I shall enquire.

First, Whether you have sufficiently reckoned up the Grounds and Occasions of that Contempt under which we lye.

Secondly, Whether there be so much ignorance in us as you suppose?

Thirdly, Whether that Ignorance that is, proceed from all those things which you assign as the Causes of it?

Fourthly, Whether all those be faults that you do so nimbly squib us for? Or if they be; Whether we be guilty of all you reckon?

Fifthly, If so, Whether you have taken a likely course to deliver us from this Contempt. For the rest, we will agree as well as we can; and if I can hit of the Tune, I will bear apart with you in *Alas poor Scholar, &c.*

First, Sir, What reason have we to thank you, that you take notice of no other Occasions of the *Contempt of the Clergy*, but the *Ignorance* of some, and the *Poverty* of others of us? Nay, you plainly say, that it proceeds from no other Cause. Page 3. *If I be not very much mistaken, whatever hath heretofore, or does at present, lessen the value of our Clergy, or render it in any degree less serviceable to the World, then might be reasonably*

hoped, may be easily referr'd to two very plain things; the Ignorance of some, and the Poverty of others of the Clergy. Do you not hereby too much excuse those who despise us? Might not one piece of your Declamation have spent it self upon the Untowardness, and Peevishness, and Prejudices of Vulgar people? Could you not have jearkt the Laiery a little, and told them of their faults? But there are two ends of a Prospective-glass; and when you had by one magnified *our* Ignorance, and almost insulted over *our* Poverty, you turn the other upon the people; by which, if possibly they may have some faults, yet they become so small, and at so great a distance, that you would not easily discern them. But I pray, Sir, though we deserve to be laugh'd at for our Ignorance, yet do we not also deserve to be pittied for our Poverty? And had it not been civil for you to have blamed the people (a little more plainly then you have any where done) for their Inhumanity in trampling upon those who are already on the ground? What if you had taken our part, and told the World, that it is the fate of Worthy men sometimes to be in Distress and Poverty; therefore where it happens that Ignorance and Poverty are not join'd in the same person, a little of your flexanimous Rhetorick might have been spar'd,

spar'd, to have inclin'd the hearts of our Parishioners not to despise us for that which we cannot help. Or if you had pleased, you could have turn'd your stile, and appeared in *Satyr* against those base-spirited men, who will seek occasions to reproach us: And while you had been doing this, you would have found somewhat else, besides Jewels, in the raking of such Dungbills. The occasions of the *Contempt* of the *Clergy* are not only on our part *Ignorance* and *Poverty*, but on the part of our contemnners there is forwardness and ill-will, and somewhat else beside, which I shall put you in mind of by and by.

In the mean time, Sir, I make no doubt, but you who so well understand the state of the mean and inferior *Clergy*, as that in a very little time (p. 111.) you could procure *Hundreds* that should ride both *Sun* and *Moon* down, and be everlastingly that *Gentlemen*, that could procure them a *Living* but of 25 or 30 l. a year, are much better acquainted with those of the better sort, who are fitter Company for a Gentleman of your parts and learning. You know some who are neither *Ignorant* nor poor, and what becomes of them? Are they honoured as much as we are despised? Are all mens mouths full of their praises? Have they that plurality of

Honour which their double Excellency qualifies them for? I fear you do not find it so: The learned Doctor when he rides abroad to take the Air, may have a Cap and a Leg, and a sullen look over the left shoulder together with it, and peradventure the ratling of his Coach may preserve him from hearing himself abused, and the distance that he keeps from his Neighbours, may hide the knowledge of it from him, but even beardless Boys shall frump him, and the Rascally Multitude shall curse him as soon as he is past by. Say, Sir, do you not know in this present age, and have you not heard that in former ages, many learned and once wealthy Clergy-men, have been accounted, as well as the *Holy Apostles*, the filth and off-scouring of the world? Do not their rude Parishioners (think you) in their Chimney-corners, over a Pot and a Pipe, liberally reproach them, and it addes well to their mirth that they can, out of their hearing abuse their Ministers. If any such thing may be, then are we to seek for other occasions, of the *Contempt* of the Clergy, than *Ignorance* and *Poverty*, for where neither of these are, where any of our Brethren are so happy as to be rich enough to buy Books which have made them wise, and to be wise enough to grow rich; yet have they not hereby purchased a sure title

to Reputation and Esteem. There are those who do not love our *Coat*, and will pick holes in it, though it be not thread-bare; and there are dirty-mouth'd Fellows, will calumniate so strongly, that all the Books in an University Library shall not teach a man wit enough to wipe it off. And then the ground and occasion of all this Contempt, is in those who are active, not in those who are passive in it.

You will tell me, Sir, it may be, that the Ignorance and Poverty of some, reflects to the disparagement of the rest of the Clergy: But what reason is there for this? There is a Doctor or two in our Neighbourhood, very learned men, and well to live, (as we say in the Countrey) divers of us that live near them are mean and inconsiderable, and scarce worthy to be Readers to the Reverend Doctors; do you think that they are the more slighted for our sakes? In reason one would think they should be the more admired, when the World sees by comparing of us together, what worthy men they are, and how few can equal them. Because there may be a Dunce or two in *Trinity* Colledge, shall therefore the *Westminster* Scholars be stopt their Degrees as if they were all so? If such a thing should happen, it were the iniquity of the *Poser*, and not want of Scholarship

larship in the Lad, that does him the injury. So that still if some men are slighted for the Imperfections of others, the evil temper of the contemnners takes the occasion, where the person contemned gives none. But, Sir, the truth is, there is somewhat else in the Clergy besides Ignorance and Poverty, that exposes them to Contempt, which because you are so civil as not to mention, I will pass over in silence too, and not betray the infirmities of my Brethren.

We may yet suppose the case better : There is a great number of Clergy-men, who together with their Learning and Estates, are more considerable for somewhat else, better than both them, as being men of great Integrity, and of very good lives ; and how goes the World with them ? If it appear that they are also Undervalued, it must remain evident, that there are other occasions of this Contempt, than what the Clergy give, and they are such as are out of their reach to remove. It is not beyond the memory of man, what deplorable sufferings the Clergy of *England* hath laboured under. You have read (I am to presume) *Bishop Hall's hard measure*, and know with what rudeness and insolencies, the patience of his co-temporary Prelates was tryed. When you consider how the Book of the incomparable

parable *Chillingworth*, was in a zealous contempt to his person, thrown into his Grave and buried with him, (which I confess I have only by Tradition;) when you read the railery of one of the Defenders of *Smectymnus* against *Bishop Hall*; and above all, the famous adventure of *Leighton*, in his *Sion's Plea against the Prelacy*. and many the like unworthy things; and adde to all this, with what contempt and scorn an Episcopal man, (a *God-Almighty-man*, as I have heard some of them in derision called) was almost hoored at in the Streets; you will confess, that there have been Clergy-men most excellently accomplished every way, who have yet been undervalued as the dirt of the Streets, though no defect on their part, gave any occasion for that Contempt. And still it continues, and so is like to do, notwithstanding any remedy that your Letter directs to, to be the case of many men both wise and honest, and if not rich, yet not poor neither, who happen amongst unmannerly and rude people, with whom though they take never so much pains, and wait for the good effect of it with a great deal of patience, yet are Clownishly dealt with, and not so much respected as a Greyhound or Spaniel, that their Neighbour-Farmer keeps for his Landlord.

Nay,

Nay, Sir, I will venture farther a little to make it appear, that *Ignorance* and *Poverty* are not the only grounds of Contempt, for some Clergy-men are as much slighted for their great *Learning*, as we of the worser sort are for our as great *Ignorance*. Country people have such strange conceptions of Learning, that it is not much below a Proverb with many of them, that *the greatest Scholars are commonly the worst Preachers*. And it often comes to pass, that if an University man out of kindness and condescention to a Country Parson, gives him a Visit and a Sermon, though it be not his humour to thunder out much *Latin* and *Greek*; though he do not soar up towards the Third Heavens for sublime Notions, nor disturb their ears with great and swelling words, yet if he preach but an University-Sermon, which (as it is to be supposed they all are) is neat and elegant, and handsomly composed, with close connexion of sence, and weight and strength of reason, such as requires a Scholar to make a judgement of it, some of the common people may admire him, and say, A great Scholar I'll warrant him; but there is a sort of people who are not much capable of close reasonings, will slight such a Sermon; and they who will do us the credit to write after us, with a great deal of bustle and eagerness, will put
up

up their tackling, and think the strange Minister is much beholden to them, if they can forbear sleeping under such a dry Sermon. Sir, Things are not judged of alwayes as they are; the tempers and humours of men are very divers one from another, and as many on the one hand are pittifully thought of for their want of Learning, so sometimes Learning it self is in disgrace. The World is well and comfortably amended since *Gracè nosse inspectum erat, Hebraicè prope hæreticum*: But there are particular men have as little kindness for Learning now, as the greatest part of men had in the dayes of old: And we can be even with the University men when they come into the Country, for all the abuses their *Prevaricators* put upon us at Commencements; some of our Parish shall have as dry bobs for them, and Learning it self shall bear part of the burden together with Ignorance. If they are not both equally guilty, yet neither of them are quite free from being an occasion of the Contempt of the Clergy.

I have not yet, Sir, waded very deep, nor enquired into the more remote and hidden causes of this Contempt. If you please to let the search be continued yet a little farther, it will be found that whether *Ignorance* and *Poverty* be in the case or no, there are those who

who do designedly despise us; and as they have ordered the matter, it is for their Interest so to do.

And first, the *Church of Rome* hath somewhat to answer for in this case. They have Emissaries herein *England*, who first craftily, and in a disguise bespatter us, and then perswade the people to hiss at us. So some men who are wiser then your ordinary shallow Countrey Parsons, suppose that the new Lights of the *Quakers* came first out of the dark Lanthorns of the *Papists*. The *Church of England* resuming her just Rights and Antient Priviledges, and returning to her pristine state of Independency upon the *Church of Rome*, hath continued in great glory, (excepting one Eclipse) for more then this hundred years. The defence upon all this Glory, next to the goodness of God, and the successive vigilance of our Sovereign Defenders of the Faith, and the renewed care of our Renowned Parliaments, hath been the Learned Clergy of *England*, besides what Foreign Divines have done, the Writings of *Jewell*, *Whitaker*, *Reynolds*, *Lawd*, *Usher*, *Morton*, *Hall*, *Prideaux*, and *Chillingworth*, and many others; some dead, and some still alive, (whom our little holes over the Oven will not half hold) have nobly fortified us against all the *Roman Batteries*: Wherefore

fore they have tried if by sinking a Mine they could blow us up, if they could blast the Credit and Reputation of the Clergy, and thereby get some advantages against our Church. For which purpose they have endeavoured to invalidate our *Orders*. They would perswade that since the times of *Queen Mary*, we have had no Regular Ordination; the first Bishops of *Queen Elizabeth* not being rightly Ordain'd nor Consecrated, had no Power to confer that upon others, which they had not themselves. If this design had prosper'd, they had done their business: The very foundations of our Honour, and Reputation, and Reverence, had been ruined, if our Clergyship had been destroyed; but this Mine was discovered and made useless, as by others, so especially by the Labours of the Industrious *Mason*. Then they tried to weaken the Repute of our Learning, and many odde tales they tell, what pittiful Universities, and what an ignorant Clergy (if we will so call them) we have in comparison of theirs. But it is a foolish thing to laugh at an Enemy before we know the strength of his Weapon, or the skill of his hand. Our redoubted Knights have vanquished the Giants. Our Champions have met them in open field, and encountered them by honest force, and by plain strength

strength overcome, and beat them into their lurking holes. But then follows the knack of knacks. They dress themselves in their Retiring-rooms after divers fashions; and from one corner comes out a Shaven-pate covered with a Periwig: He walks the streets all the City over, and discourses of his Travels, and greatly pitties the Clergy of *England*, that they fall short of the Honour, which the Priests beyond the Seas meet with. Then he insinuates as far as he dare trust his Company, that for divers reasons it cannot be expected, that any of us, though never so deserving men, should be revered so much as they in *Italy* are; and sily takes all occasions to magnifie the Splendour, and advance the Reputation of the *Church of Rome*, that he may thereby at last bring us into Contempt.

From another apartment of the Den, spring me out half a score Saints, that have renounced the Poms and Vanities of the World, such as are Hatbands and Ribbons, and Lace, &c. And no body would think they would be Panders to the *Whore of Babylon*, they look so honestly. They sprinkle a little (the better to deceive) their *Billingsgate* Rhetorick, with some Prophecies against *Antichrist*, and *Idolatry*, and *Popery*. But down go the rotten-Ministers of *England*,
root

root and branch. They kill and slay all *Baals* Priests. Neither our black Coats, nor our white Surplices find any favour with them. "We are all Hirelings, that preach "for gain, dumb Dogs, unless Tythes open "our mouths. *The light that enlightens every* "man that comes into the world, hath forsaken us; for if we had the Spirit, we "should preach by the Spirit, and not by "words written with Paper and Ink, which "are all but a dead letter. Wherefore because thus we deceive the people, they "must come out from among us, that they "may not be partakers of our plagues. Thus they talk, and these plagues would without doubt soon come upon us, if God would give them that power over us, which he gave their Father over *Job*.

All this while, the crafty Jesuite who hath set these men on work, stands behind the Curtain to observe the issue; and if by any means he can divide and weaken us, or by any Instruments throw dirt in the face of the Clergy, he claps his hands, and rejoices and says, *Hoc facit pro nobis*: We shall never gain upon *England*, till the Clergy by some means or other grow despised.

Sometimes they perswade a zealous Minister, who hath no more Learning then will do him good, to undertake a dispute with



with a subtle Priest, who perchance by some quirk or other baffles and non plusses him, and then presently this reflects to the dishonour of the whole Clergy; as if we had no more able Disputants then they pick out from among us. I enquire after no more of their Devices, though more they have; by any of which if they bring us into disesteem, they serve their own ends, and hope to gain the more Profelytes to their party. And it might, Sir, have entred into your imagination, considering how sedulous they are, by all Artifices to promote their own ends, that we are not onely accessory to our own shame. Besides our *Ignorance* and *Poverty*, we have *Adversaries* who make it their businesse to lessen our Value, and to obstruct our Serviceableness.

You know, Sir, who they are that think *Bartholomew-Day* deserves to be kept as a Fasting-day; and these also have an Interest to drive on, by our discredit, though it be such as is little worthy of the Profession they make, of a severer Sanctity, and a stricter Conscientiousness, then they will allow us to excel in. How happy do they think it would be for *England*, if they could persuade the *Parliament*, that there is need of them; that the Work of the Ministry cannot be carried on as it ought to be, unless they

they be again taken into Employment. There is no great probability, that these Gentlemen will believe all this, till they come to be more disposed to favour Conventicles, or to go to them to hear what is there secretly whisper'd to this purpose. But that part of the people who have charmed their ears to their tongues, and can hear them mutter in a corner, when they do not like the man in the Surplice at Church, will believe that such and such things are true; because such a Good man at such a Friends house the other day said so. And what do they say? "Oh the
 "Conformable Ministers, the Superstitious
 "Time-serving Ministers that now are, will
 "never do half so much good by their
 "Preaching, as was done a dozen or twenty
 "years ago. There is nothing such Heart-
 "affecting Preaching now, nothing so much
 "powerful Prayer now, as hath been in for-
 "mer times. There are not so many Con-
 "verted now; the Power of Godliness is
 "almost gone out of the Land. The Ark is
 "a going; Oh who will pray for the stay-
 "ing, or rather for the returning of the
 "Ark! Oh who will set to a helping hand
 "by their Prayers, that the faithful Ministers
 "may be restor'd again!

Sir, I do not make my self merry, in fa-
 cing that I do apishly imitate this kind of
 men. It grieves my soul to think that they

should thus labour to ingratiate themselves into the Affections of the Vulgar, to the discouragement of us in our Work. But either they who follow and admire them do them wrong, or else they do at this rate strive to raise their own Credit upon the ruine of ours. I do not accuse them all. There is a good number of them who give us all fair respect, and comply with us a good way, and we thank them for it. But there are also some who are a little peevish, and do not onely strive to lessen our Value, but to hinder us also in our being serviceable among our people; both which you lay to the charge of our Ignorance and Poverty, as if they were alone guilty. I think, Sir, whatever our Poverty may, yet our Ignorance is never the greater for all this. But where our Credit is concern'd, it is not what we are, but what we are represented, and believed to be, that either greatens or lessens it. And so long as such dissatisfactions remain, and some men hold up their party firm to them, by dealing thus boldly with us, when you are pleas'd to enquire after every thing that lessens our Value, and hinders our Serviceableness; this might have been taken in, or if you had not car'd to mention it, you would have said enough, if our Ignorance and Poverty had been onely some, or the main of those things that lessen our Value, and not the onely things.

There

There is yet another sort of men who do us great disservice. They are your *Blades*, the foully vitious and notoriously debauch'd persons, the Gallants that can damn and confound us in their Curses with as great pleasure, as we do with sadness admonish them of their danger, according as the Holy Scriptures give us Authority. Some there are, who resolving never to be better by any good Instructions, think it their Interest to slight us; because by lessening our Value, they may lessen our Serviceableness too. The meaner thoughts they have of us, the more contentedly they may excuse themselves in not practising our Doctrine. It is not always *Ignorance* or *Poverty* of the *Preacher*, it is sometimes the *Wickedness* of the *Hearer* that administers the Occasion of this Contempt. When men resolve to walk on in the *Counsel of the Ungodly*, it facilitates their course to sit down sometimes in the *Seat of the Scornful*. If it may happen once in a Moneth, that the Preacher may make use of some Ungentile and not very Scholarlike Phrase or Comparison, that shall be remembered and laught at so long, till all that was serious and grave is slid away, without making any impression. And I do much fear, that from hence proceeds a great deal of that scorn that is cast upon us. Your

Hectors Rampant are too couragious to be trighted by every *puling Parson*. And I perswade my self, that if our *blessed Saviour* himself, should come again into the World, in the same manner as he did before, though he should again speak as *never man spake*, yet there would be found those who would deride and set him at naught now, as much as they did of old. Wickedness is bold enough, but yet it is witty too : because it is a great step to uncontrollable debauchery, to have an opinion, that the Preachers who recommend a holy life, are contemptible persons, therefore by this method, do men pawn themselves to the Devil, *viz.* by being Devilishly disposed to affront any thing that is better than themselves. Wherefore again somewhat else is sometimes the occasion of the Contempt of the Clergy, and not only our *Ignorance* and *Poverty*.

Sir, I could have let all this pass, but that it seems to me, you have by thus stating the case done us a great unkindness, if not some wrong. You suppose we are contemn'd, it is too true : You concern your self to enquire into the occasions of it, as if you were willing to remedy it, but I doubt so preposterously, that if some body do not seek to lessen the value of your Letter, that will so far as it is believ'd still more lessen our value. Me-thinks

thinks I can without inspiration prophecy what greetings we must look for, from some of those who do so *jollily* condemn us, if we happen to meet them with your Letter in their hands. "Look you here Parson, have you seen this Book? Here is a very learned Gentleman that loves you well, and is sorry to see you so much despised; but (then it is a great hazzard if he do not Rammer out an Oath) it is all your own fault, he hath made it as plain as the Sun, that your own circumstances expose you to Contempt, He can find nothing to blame us for, what ever lessens your value is in your selves; You are a great many of you a company of dull ignorant Blockheads, and poor mean inconsiderable fellows: You think much that you are not courted and reverenc'd, you may soon have as much as you deserve: If therefore you are slighted, sink in your sorrows, pitty your selves, and do not blame us.

If any such thing happen, I believe you love us so well, that you will wish you had reflected a little upon others. I am confident you do not excuse those who may thus abuse us. I would you had not said *whatever* lessens our value is our *Ignorance* or *Poverty*; If it be our misfortune in which we can't help our selves, yet we would have thank'd

you, if you would have chastis'd the people a little, especially for their insolency in contemning those who are neither *Ignorant* nor *Poor*.

Having thus far, Sir, given you your saying, it is now time to enquire,

Secondly, Whether the Clergy of *England* be so Ignorant as you suppose. Ignorance is bold and assuming, and they who are given to it, do no where more betray it, than in their confident pretences to wit and learning. So peradventure while I am excusing my Brethren, I may do them no other good but this, *viz.* adde to their company, by proving my self one of their number. But because my hand is in, I will do my weak endeavour (but alwayes with submission to your better Judgement) to make it appear, that the present Clergy of *England* is not so Ignorant as you suggest, at least not so grossly simple as thereby to become ridiculously contemptible, or to be rendred incapable of doing service. You acknowledge there are some Learned men among us, but do not think it reasonable that the Learning of a few, should expiate for the Follies of the rest, or make such full satisfaction, as that the whole number should be reputed Learned. Good Sir, allow me the same favour, and I freely grant; Among the many 1000 Clergy-men
that

that are in *England*, divers may be dull and heavy, but why should this reflect more upon the whole body of the Clergy to their dishonour, than the Learning of some does to their honour. That which is to be considered, is what the generality of us appear to be; so I hope to offer somewhat to your consideration, that may deliver the present Clergy of *England* in the whole, take them one with another, from being accounted despicably Ignorant.

And first, Sir, it is manifest that the *English* Clergy is much improv'd in Learning since the beginning of *Queen Elizabeth's* Reign. The time was within less than these 120 years, when *Oxford* her self was so ill provided of men fit to Preach, that the *High-Sheriff* of the County being as the times then were a Learned man came up into *St. Maries* Pulpit, and in charity to those who wanted good Preaching, gave them a Sermon, whereof this is the most excellent beginning. *Arriving at the Mount of St Maries, in the stony Stage where I now stand, I have brought you some fine Biskets, baked in the Oven of Charity, and carefully conserv'd for the Chickens of the Church, the Sparrows of the Spirit, and the sweet Swallows of Salvation.* What think you, Sir, have you ever a Story in all your Letter more ridiculous than this would be,

if it were a Story but of two or three years old? No surely, the meanest of our Clergy can out-do some that were of greatest repute in those blinder times. The way of Preaching was quite another thing in those dayes, than it is now. There was Learning in that age, but it run another way. Their manner of Preaching was much meaner. And I suppose the Ignorance which you bewail in us now, is that which we discover in our manner of Preaching; for as to other things, I do not observe that you reckon us greater Fools than our Neighbours: But we want Learning for the purpose for which we take H. Orders; we do not Preach so as may probably obtain the end of Preaching, which is without doubt the welfare of the Souls of those that hear us. Thus you think. But what then will you say to the state of the Church as it was in *Edward 6.* and *Queen Elizabeths* dayes? (for I will not go so far back as to bewail the state of Religion in former times, when the Priests did not so well understand Latin as to be able to pronounce their Creed right, but when they had hobbled over from *Creezum sum patrem onitentem anicum*, to the end of the Creed, instead of *vitam aternam Amen*, they conclude with *bitum & turnum agen.*) Among the Preachers of *Edward 6th's* dayes, few were

were more famous than *Bishop Latimer*, a right honest man indeed, and a learned man too; but how would you be tickl'd if you should hear such things from any of us, as you may find in his Sermons. The odde Stories he brings in any how, the continual wandring from his Text to tell them what he had a mind to say, the *Tyburn Tippetts*, and the *Hanguin tuums*, and the drawing of men round about the Town with a Pudding; his playing at Cards in his Sermon, and making *Hearts Trumps*; and what great things his Father did in a Farm of 3 or 4 *l. per ann.* and a hundred such kind of things, which would not be thought at all grave now a dayes. Let our Sermons be compar'd to his, and let it be consider'd that he was a Preacher to the Court, and one of the principal of them; and then if you seldom hear of any thing so homely in a Countrey Village, as that which was then very acceptable in a Princes Court, yield a little to the improvement that is made of Preaching in these times. Though now and then a few unhandsome passages drop from some men, without study and due consideration, yet Preachers in gross are worthy of some regard now adayes, because the Sermons that were of old, though more exceptionable than ours now, sound good entertainment when they happen'd in

an age of little Preaching. Sir, I disparage not the good Old man, who had Learning enough in Disputation to maintain the Protestant Cause, and had Christian constancy enough to dye a Martyr in defence of it. I believe he might do much good by his manner of Preaching, because even when he run away from his Text, he went to meet his Hearers; nor do I wonder that he should then be acceptable. That which I consider him for is, a little to vindicate the way of Preaching that now obtains, as less lyable to be despised than his was; and therefore though many of us are very Ignorant in comparison of our learned Brethren in City and University, yet methinks our Ignorance should not make our Persons so despicable, so long as our Preaching is somewhat refined beyond what it was an hundred years ago, or thereabouts.

Yea, Sir, we have this comfort farther, that however you reckon us Ignorant and pittiful Fellows, yet the Reverend Fathers of the Church have a better opinion of the present Clergy over whom they exercise a Jurisdiction. The Canons and Articles of our Church, which were established in some of the first Convocations after *Queen Elizabeth* began her Reign, suppose that there were in those dayes divers Unpreaching Ministers,
who

who were not thought of Abilities sufficient to be permitted to open the Scriptures, but were therefore directed to the Reading of those *Homilies* which were compiled for the supply of this defect. I deny not but many of us may sometimes preach Sermons raw and undigested, and like to be to less purpose, than if we read an *Homily*, if our people would bear it. But methinks we may a little think well of our selves, and look upon our selves as got into a higher form than many Divines of those times; because no late Convocation hath declar'd so mean an Opinion of our present Clergy, as to refuse them Authority to preach, or to enjoin them only to read *Homilies*.

Sir, I take you to be a wiser man, than to have a very Superlative Opinion of your own Wisdom. You will give me leave to believe, that my *Lords the Bishops*, who have better advantages to know then private men; and are also more concern'd to know the Qualities of those whom they Ordain, and License and Constitute, do better understand what kind of Clergy does now Officiate in the Church of *England*, then private persons. You will also excuse me, if I gather from their manner of governing the Church, that they do not judge the Clergy so foully and contemptibly Ignorant, as thereby to
be

be made little, if at all serviceable in the places where they are. Yea, and the Opinion that Foreign Divines have of the *English* Clergy, is not to be despised. The Writings of our Practical Divines (many of which are very little more Elaborate then when they were first preached) are in so great esteem beyond the Seas, that it hath been much a Practice for *Germans* and *Transylvanians*, who intend to preach when they return back, to come into *England*, and learn enough of our Language for their purpose, which is to translate some of our Authours into their own Tongue; and when they get home, it is hard to say, whether they reckon to do more Honour to our Countrey, or more Service to their own. And I know where a Foreigner of good Note and Learning (*Spanhemius*) acknowledgeth to the everlasting Credit of our Nation, that such Books are Translated into other Languages; and that Practical Divinity is in a manner peculiar to *England*. It may be you will tell me, that if there be any Credit in all this, it concerns but a few, and a great number of the inferiour Clergy may yet be lamentably Ignorant. It may be so: but when others abroad are pleased upon a general Contemplation of the manner which we *English* take in Preaching, to honour us much, and

to give us the preheminance above the Preachers of other Countreys; it had not been uncivil in one among our selves, who also may live to be a Countrey Parson himself one day, to have spoken a little more favourably for our Reputation.

There is yet, Sir, one Argument more, from whence may be at least probably inferr'd, that we are not so stupidly Ignorant as you presume, (*i. e.*) the great progress that the men of this age have made in other kinds of Learning. What brave things have been done in Chymistry, Anatomy, the Mathematicks, Astronomy, and all other Sciences, even such as descend to the great perfection of Trade, where Learning hath great influence, though Tradesmen may not be aware of it. The *Virtuosi* have given many degrees of Ennoblement to Learning: And if you knew the Gentleman, and will give any Credit to him, who gives an Account of the new Sect of *Latitude-men* in a Letter to his Friend *G. B.* who I believe may be a kin to your Friend *R. L.* both feign'd Parsons; he will tell you, that the *World is grown to an infinite desire of knowledge*, and therefore prophesies the progress of the *New Philosophy*. Yea, you your self are pleased to say, *We are now in an age of great Philosophers, and men of Reason, and of great quick-*

quickness and fancy, p. 36. Now, Sir, is it not a strange thing, that they who have diverted to other Studies, should for a great part prove excellent in their kind, able Lawyers, expert Physicians, yea, and ingenious Poets too; yet onely they who settle to Divinity, should for the most part be dry and dull, and good for little. I dare say, that when Sophisters take their first Degrees, there is no such visible difference among them, as that they who probably will take to other Employments, are ingenious and good Scholars; but they who are determin'd to Divinity, are Dunces, and such as have a great favour done them, that they are not stopr.

Sir, by such Imaginations as these, a man who hath little convers'd with the Clergy of the Countrey, might judge that they must needs keep pace with Learned men of other Faculties. And I was willing to say what by a few thoughts upon this matter came to my mind, to recover if it might be, some tolerable opinion in the World concerning us. And I will be bold in good earnest to hope, that the number of those who are shamefully Ignorant is not so great, as that it may reasonably reflect to the disparagement of the whole Clergy. Yet after all I must acknowledge, that I do not so little understand

derstand how things go, (though I never understood much) as not to believe that there are many, too many, of weak Parts and small Improvements, who have made a shift to climb into the Pulpit, when any Seat in the Church would better become them. We do so much betray our want of Learning, both publickly, and in our private Conferences, that there is no arguing against Experience. But this you know at least well enough, and therefore, as also because I would fain have so much of a Wise man in me, as not to labour to prove my self (among the rest of my Brethren) a Fool, I need not take any pains to inform you of it. I go on therefore to examine the Causes and Occasions, and to enquire,

Thirdly, Whether the Ignorance of the Clergy do proceed from those Causes whence you imagine? Or whether instead of them, at least in addition to them, there are not other things worthy to be had in consideration; which if they do not deliver us from the imputation of Ignorance, yet they extenuate the fault, and render us much rather Objects of Pity than Contempt? The School-dames are much engag'd to you, that you would not begin with them; for a Gentleman of your Wit could easily have made it out, as well as you have done many other things,

things, that the pretty melodious Tones, wherewith we recreate as well as aff. & our Hearers out of the Pulpit, have their Original from the manner of our learning our *A. B. C.* But it not being fit you should descend to so ignoble a quarrel, the first that feel your lash are the School-masters; a sort of men who are able to revenge themselves upon you, and I will not undertake for some of the *Westminster* boyes, what might come in their minds these last Holy-days. The persecution of a Poem is no light Affliction; they are notable Lads at Squibs and Crackers, and you know there is a keen sort of Verse,

which Badger-like bites till its teeth do meet.

Ingenious *Cowley* could have done such a feat before he went to the Uoiversity. You do therefore very wisely to remove *Westminster* and *St. Pauls* out of the way of your indignation, that you may with lesse danger fall upon Countrey-Schools. Where truly, Sir, I have reason to yield somewhat to you, but not all. Among the many worthy Schoolmasters that are in *England*, who make it as much their Recreation as their Business, to instruct Children, (and no man else is fit to be a Schoolmaster, but they who take a pleasure in it) there is also a company of sorry souls, fitter to whistle to a Team of Horses,

Horses, than to teach boyes; the greatest part of whose care, is to be secure, that their Scholars do not pose them in next Lesson; and therefore they have the wit to study it themselves first. As once one of them told me, when I ask'd him how he manag'd his business: Oh (sayes he) well enough. *I know where they are to say next, and I study enough over night to teach my boyes the next day.* I think these may a little deserve your Contempt, as well as the Clergy; but while you let flye at these, you do also declare your dissatisfaction in the whole Art of ordering Grammar-School. In which case I beg your pardon, if I am not of your opinion in all you say, especially in that conceit of yours, which concerns the study of the Tongues at School, before Lads are admitted at the University: For I enquire, Sir, either learning the *Latine* and *Greek* Language is necessary or not; if it be, some good proficiency is to be made in it at School, or it may be let alone till afterwards. That there is a necessity of having some competent Skill in these, you, Sir, of all men should not deny, who do so much blame us Countrey Parsons for Ignorance, and want of Scholarship. Indeed you have acknowledg'd it so much, that I cannot doubt of your sense: *There is much reason to value these Tongues before*
C 2
others,

because the best of humane Learning hath been deliver'd to us in those Languages: And since you cared to say no more, you had a great deal of reason to make that acknowledgement in honour of that kind of Study. But then, Sir, I assume and proceed. If Tongues are at any time to be studied, why should you find fault with Schoolmasters for tying their boyes pretty close to it: You acknowledge (p. 4) the natural inclinations of boys to Ease and Idleness. Wherefore it must follow that they must be a little task't if any good be done with them. But you would have them divert sometimes to other Studies, and learn the Principles of Arithmetick and Geometry, &c. Very good, Sir, let them learn as much as they are capable of. But shall this be done with intermitting the Study of Latine and Greek, or not? If they have time to do all, let them go on: If not, it seems to me, that other Studies may better be deferr'd, than the Study of the Tongues not brought to some tolerable perfection, before they leave going to School; and that for this reason: I believe you do not often find this observation contradicted; When boys come up to Cambridge or Oxford raw in the knowledge of Greek and Latine, they seldom attain to any Excellency afterwards. The School is the proper place for this kind of Study.

Study. When they come at the Colledge to *Logick* and *Philosophy*, and the study of *things*, they are so taken up with being in a new world, with Phrases and Notions which they never heard of before; that they leave behind them Skill in Tongues, as a more jejune and barren kind of Employment. The more we grow towards men, the more we understand, that *Words* are invented onely to signifie *Things*; and while we are studying the Nature of *Things*, we grudge the time that is spent, in hunting the Etymology of a word to its first Theam. The Understanding that is in man does indeed early discover it self, but Memory is the great Store-house of Understanding. And if the Memory be sufficiently employed at School, it will lay a good foundation for the perfecting the Understanding afterwards. If you complain that it is a great dulling to a quick pated Lad, to have nothing else to do, but to reduce the Grammar of his Lesson to some Rule in his *Syntaxis*; as if their Masters employ'd them in nothing else, but *cunningly to search out the Antecedent and the Relative, &c.* (p. 10.) and did not by degrees inure or prepare them at least to the knowledge of things, under Correction, Sir, you are much mistaken.

ken: For the Poetry, and History, and Oratory that is studied at School, (and such things are read besides *Fauna Linguarum*) are a most excellent manuduction to a happy progress in Learning in elder years. For there is somewhat else in these Books, than accounts of *Achilles* Toes and the *Grecians* Boots. There is together with the fabulous part of Poetry a great deal of useful Learning there to be found. You may fancy that, that little which is learnt in these things at School, is the reason why they are no more study'd afterwards; and another may with as much reason presume, that Boyes being well initiated in these Books then, will earnestly covet to perfect their knowledge in those things which they began to receive an Impression of under the *ferula*. But then for the pleasure that may be taken in these Studies, I am loath to warrant much, as not knowing what every body findes; but if I may guess at others by my self, then I am satisfied, that there is somewhat else beside a Play-day, will make a School boy cry *Gratias*. I remember (though I took my Learning so hardly, that I have ever since been fit for nothing, but to be one of the Ignorant (clergy) that in many a Lesson out of *Florus*, and *Juvenal*, and *Tully*, and such

such kind of School-books, my Master did more gratifie me by opening my Understanding, and preparing for greater degrees of knowledge, then I should have been pleas'd in playing all the week long; knowledge doth insensibly creep upon those who are desirous of it. And while Boyes are in the Study of *Greek* and *Latine*, it comes in their way, and offers it self to those, who do not with some violence refuse to entertain it. Wherefore, Sir, do not think the time ill spent, that is taken up in this kind of Study; for according to my poor opinion, if Schoolmasters are any thing chargeable for the Ignorance of the Clergy, it is rather because they send their Scholars to the University, before they can well make a Verse or form a *Greek* Verb, or are in some good measure skill'd in the Idioms of the *Latine* and *Greek* Languages; then because they bind them Apprentices to that which you count a Slavery; *the tiresome Repetitions of Amo's and τῶντων's.*

If I would make the worst Construction of every thing, I might imagine by one thing you say, (p. 16.) that thirteen or fourteen years of age is old enough, for a Boy to be dub'd a *Freshman* in the University; but it follows two pages after, that

*twenty three is the usual age, after seven years being at the University; and if you think that time enough for a man to Commence Master of Arts, then I have nothing to quarrel in this case; but if you think this usual age is at the latest, and that if Schoolmasters did their true intent to their Scholars, they might at thirteen or fourteen years be fit to remove: then, Sir, give me leave to suggest, that I doubt you lay as great a foundation for an Ignorant Clergy, as any you desire to remove. I find Doctor Hammond was admitted at thirteen; and being of very pregnant parts, did after rise to somewhat a glorious degree of Learning: and I think I know another very learned man admitted at that age. But for the main, Sir, should Schoolmasters turn off their Boyes so soon, it being true what you suppose, that many of their Friends Purse are too short to maintain them long at the University, I much fear that the Clergy would be less knowing then they are, if they should be entred so young into the more abstruse parts of Learning. By that little Observation I have made, I think it is true, that *Cateris paribus*, of two Lads admitted in the same year, one of fourteen or fifteen, the other of sixteen or seventeen years*

years of age, the oldest does sooner understand his business, and in less time conquer the difficulties of *Logick*, than the younger; and but that I know the Circumstances of all Boyes will not bear it, and the opportunities they have of advantaging themselves by the favour of persons of quality would be lost; I am of opinion, it would be better for the Church, if none or but few (the ripeness of whose parts may deserve it, because of the extraordinariness of their proficiency) were admitted till about sixteen years of age into the University: Whither when they come you follow them.

And I, Sir, follow you to consider whether the reason why the Clergy is so ignorant, be their being ill manag'd at the University. You seem to wish that they may be well examined before their Admission; but I believe if you would concern your self so far, you could sollicite and procure (I say no more, because I think you understand what I mean) that a Lad to save his year, should without so much as going up to be examined by the Master or Fellows of the Colledge, be admitted upon the bare recommendation of as ignorant a Countrey Minister as my self; yea, though it were likely he would not come up to continue of a twelve moneth after.

When

When they are there, two things you think would contribute somewhat to make us less Ignorant; which, because you should not think me peevishly willing to contradict and cavil, and carp at every thing you say, I will not gain-say. Onely I leave thus much by way of Reflection upon them. One of them may be, but it is doubtful whether it would do any good: The other might do much good, but it is not at all probable that it can be effected. If the Heads of the University so pleased, it might with great ease be brought to pass, that Lads should now and then exercise their *English*, as well as their *Latine* Tongue, but it also very probably may be found true, that after this Exercise hath been Probationer a matter of a dozen or twenty years, by Experience it may appear, that it will signifie little to the handsomer expressing our selves in the pulpit, or not more then half a dozen Sermons preach'd in little Countrey Churches, (where young beginners commonly first venture) would do in the case.

For the other practice of quibbling and joaking, it would be the great Interest of us Countrey Parsons and Vicars, if a Law were made against it. We should not then be so much afraid of what uses to follow, *O vos*
Sacer-

Sacerdotes Rustici, in the *Pravaricators* speech. And in earnest I yield you, that it turns the tempers of many men into froth and vanity. A witty man they say will rather lose his Friend than a Jest. It is well if sometimes he do not lose his discretion too, if he do not lay aside his *Wisdom* to show his *Wit*. But when an hundred men have complain'd of this as well as you and I, there is like to be little cure for it. There is a waggish knavery in young Scholars, they are so full of a merry conceit, that they will be ready to burst, if they be not suffer'd, to give vent; and if the Exercise of the Faculty be stopt in the Schools, yet the Faculty remains, and a Lad may sooner be expell'd the Colledge, than this Habit expell'd out of him. It is an Evil of the nature of many others, it is well if it were not; but there is little hopes but it will still be. And yet, Sir, because Wit is a thing out of the reach of such an one as I am, I will be bold to adde, that as there is much evil in it which I know, so there may be some good in it which I know not. It doth not alwayes necessarily follow, that *Rope-dancers in the Schools prove Jackpuddings in the Pulpit*; sometimes they never come there, their wit prefers them to more Gentile (as the world

accounts them) preferments. If they do, they behave themselves very gravely and seriously there : As I could instance in more *Pravariators* and *Tripus's* than one, but you know them as well as I.

That which follows in your Letter, is rather a discovery of the effects, than the causes of our Ignorance, when you consider how we behave our selves in the Pulpit. Wherefore if those causes which you have thought good to take notice of, give but an imperfect account of that into which you enquire ; It may be worth my while to adde a Supplement to them. I will not trouble you by representing how many of those whose Ignorance you bewail, have not those things you mention to blame for the causes of it. They were bred up in good Schools, and were well educated at the University, and were never guilty of making pretences to wit, while they were Sophisters, but were as far from being able to quibble then, as you think them to be from speaking good sence now. It might therefore be added, that the dulness of some mens natural parts, together with the short stay they make at the University, (which in truth you have great reason to take notice of) are great reasons of our Ignorance : Yet beyond all this, there is somewhat more to be said

said in the case: for it is manifest, that divers of those who are counted Ignorant in the Countrey, before they left the Colledge, were better thought of, and had the repute if not of excellent, yet of good Scholars. Wherefore under favour Sir, I think there are three things, beyond what you have considered in this part of your Letter, which do much concur to the keeping of us low in Learning. Want of Books, want of time to make the best use of those few we have, and want of converse with Learned men. The two first are occasion'd by our Poverty, which you know is great; the third by the places where we live, which hinders us from that correspondence with Learned men, which in Universities and Cities does make some men Scholars, almost whether they will or no.

First, Sir, what marvel is it if our knowledge be as short as our means to know are? what can we do without Books, unless learning were insus'd and inspir'd into us by a Miracle? and how should we, whose Poverty you either pitty or laugh at, come by any number of Books? The little time we have spent at the University, was not so idly thrown away, but we have heard of a great number of Books that are in the World, and sometimes

sometimes out of curiosity (if for no other reason) we would get a sight of some of the publick Libraries. There are many Writers whom they call the *Fathers* of the *Church*, and there are some Books (whatever they are) that go by the name of *Councils*. There are also *Schoolmen* and *Commentators*, and abundance of Writers Antient and Modern, Foreigners and our own Countrey-men; and if we can but get such a smattering in these, as to be able to distinguish one sort of Writers from another, and to talk a little of them when we come into the company of those who are more Learned than our selves, we acquit our selves well. For alas Sir, how should we be able to go much farther? If we had these Books, it is not impossible but we might understand them, and we should be willing to read them. But poor we are not able to buy. If once in a quarter of a year, we make a hard shift to spare a shilling to buy such an excellent Piece as your Letter is, it is very fair: but this rises to little in seven years; we may live a great while before we have a well-furnished Library.

Nor if we had it, can we find any great time to make use of it. If we can turn to an *Expositor* or two (if we have them) to
know

know the meaning of the Text, and be sure that we raise no Doctrines but what do (as we use to say) naturally flow from the words, and can then find time to write down what we intend to say, in giving the Reasons of the Doctrine, and the several Uses, that may be made of it; in the doing of all this, a great part of the Week will go away, and for the rest we shall have employment enough for it, in sending about for our Tythe: for by that time, that after ten or a dozen Messages we have got enough of that *same*, to go to Market with the next week, we reckon it a good weeks work. As for the reading of any thing else, than what may just serve to help us make our Sermons, that is much out of our way. We do pretty equally want money to buy Books, and want time to read those few we have: so that some who are disposed to think charitably of us, will rather wonder that we have so much, than that we have so little Learning. Yea I believe there are few of those who despise us for our Ignorance, who supposing they had the same incumbrances that we have, would go much before us in knowledge. As to skill in Controversial learning. it is little less than impossible, we should excell in it. We have heard talk of *Socinianism*, and may understand

stand the meaning of it : But *Socinian* Authors are so dear, that *Slichtingius*, *Crellius*, *Volkelius*, and two or three more, are of as great price as some of our whole Libraries. So *Bellarmino's* Controversies, and others that concern the quarrel between us and the Church of *Rome*, and such other Books which I have heard learned men talk of among themselves, are of a great price. It is well that a small *German Systeme* or two, (Books which some sort of men can as little contain themselves from having a sting at, though they write but a Letter to a Friend, as the *Non-conformist* can forbear inveighing against *Diotrephes*) and the *Practice of Piety*, and some few other good Books are not very dear, for if they were, *Clericus absque libro* would be our Motto. There are I know some of us in more happy circumstances, who have Books to read, or money to buy, and if their abundance does not, to be sure their necessities do not hinder them from spending their time among good Books. If these men be not more Learned, than we of the poorer sort, upon themselves be their fault.

Yet neither are these of our Brethren to be wondred at, if though they have good Libraries, their learning does not equal theirs who

who daily converse with living Libraries.
 Reading of Books will signifie little
 without due meditation upon what we
 read, nor will both together avail much,
 unlesse occasion be sometimes offer'd,
 by the company we meet with to im-
 prove and make use of what we have
 read. Again, by bare reading we must
 rely upon our own single Understand-
 ing in the judgement we make of the
 Authours we read: Whereas if we
 could discourse, we should observe the
 sense of others, and make our selves wise
 by their reading as well as our own.
 Now, Sir, though you have lived much
 in the company of learned men, yet if
 peradventure you might be born near a
 Countrey Village, or may sometimes
 have some Friends to visit in such by-
 corners; then, I pray, the next time
 you ride through a Street remarkable
 for nothing so much, as that haply the
 Church is not thatch't as well as most
 of the Houses: Consider with your
 self, what comfortlesse Converse as to
 matters of Learning, is the poor Par-
 son of this Town condemn'd to? How
 should a man be a Scholar here? or if

D

he

he had somewhat of Scholarship in him before he came hither, how must his Parts need rust for want of use? If he will study for his own pleasure, he may, but else he may as well call his Hogs in *Latine*, as make any great use of his Learning among his Neighbours; or as well expect Instructions again from the same Swine, as hope to advantage himself by the Converse of any of them, unlesse it may happen that there be a Gentleman or two, or some few ingenious persons in his Parish. Not that we despise our honest Farmers, as you men of Learning cannot but do. If we can obtain the End for which we live among them, to make them better in this World, and to fit them for Heaven hereafter; our satisfaction in doing our Duty, and our hopes of accomplishing so happy an End, renders our Countrey Lives as pleasurable to us, as yours may be to you, whose Ingenuity and Wit makes all the Gentry in the Countrey when you come among them, admire your Person, and covet your Company. So that if you will give us leave to judge of our own state, we do
not

not think our selves altogether unhappy. But as to the purpose of Learning, we acknowledge our selves under a disadvantage. The two former are true of many of us, we want Books, and time to read them if we had them. But the latter is true of almost all. If Countrey Ministers are not so learned as to free them from Contempt, it is not alwayes, because they begin amiss at School, or were unfortunately tutoured at the University, the condition of life which the places we live in determine us to, is the great reason why the Clergy is no more learned.

When you have consider'd our Education at the University, upon which you discourse in short, proportionably to the short stay you suppose we make there, you look upon us in our Benefices, and enquire into the manner of our Behaviour in the Pulpit: Where one would think you had been some Gatherer of Briefs, or some such Itinerant Gentleman, who hath had occasion often to visit our Countrey-Churches, you do so well know how we entertain our Hearers. You can tell what

a stream of Rhetorick our Metaphor Merchants sail in, who live in a Sea-Town. You know how we we muster up our Comparisons in the open and Champion Countreys. You remember too what Trade we drive in great Towns. If I could learn your marks, I would give notice to a couple of Ale-houses in my Parish, who I hope will do me word, if you chance to come in of a Saturday night, (but that I doubt you will come disguised, not like your self, (*i. e.*) a worthy Gentleman) and I will promise you one of the best sermons in my budget; for I do not love that my Brethren of the Clergy should generally suffer for an inconsiderate expression or two, that may fall from me among my own people, who I know would take no offence at it.

Many such things you take notice of; but such as make work for another Enquiry.

The question is, Whether all those things you reckon be faults; and whether we be guilty of all those faults you reckon?

First,

First, it may be we are excusable in some of those things which you make your self and others such sport with. I do not say in all of them, for I do honestly acknowledge to you, that many of those things you have instanced in, are unhandsome, not grave nor becoming our place, when we pretend to speak from God to the people. The Pulpit is an unseemly place wherein to act the part of Stage-players, and to behave our selves, as if our great design were to exercise the visible rather than rational Faculty of our Hearers. The Salvation of the Souls of men is a very serious thing; and the Endeavours that are addressed for the obtaining of it, had need be serious and proportionate. It is easie to soar too high after sublime Notions, till we mount beyond the keen of vulgar Understandings. We may also easily sink too low into a dirty and unmannerly way of expressing our selves, unbecoming the Gravity of so sacred an Employment. Wherefore, Sir, the Complement we receive when we come out of the Church, I could in great earnest pass upon you,

and thank you for your great pains, if I thought it probable that the stories you tell, would onely shame us and make us more wary in what we do; and not over and above make the whole Clergy more contemptible than yet we are. Yea, it might not have been amiss too, if you had whipt us for two other Childishnesses of ours; the odde Tones and the mimical Gestures, whereby many of us squeak and puppet it, and make our selves ridiculous to our Hearers, by making as much sport with the manner, as with the matter of our Sermons.

But, Sir, while you were upon this Argument, was it well done to talk at that rate, as if yon design'd to bring the whole Office of Preaching into Contempt? If I had the rich vein of Wit, whereby you are so admirably qualified, I might undertake to pick something out of the best Sermon that hath been preach'd any time this hundred years, that may as well be laught at, as some of those things which you seem to me to abuse us for.

If we would prepare the attention of our Auditours, and by a Preface persuade

swade them that we have somewhat considerable to say; then we run the hazard of your displeasure; for though you do not bluntly condemn all Prefaces, (and you would not be overwise if you did) yet with a certain slieness you insinuate, that there is somewhat throughout the whole Method of our Preaching, which makes us contemptible. And the first thing you take notice of, is; *Before the Text be divided, a Preface is to be made;* and afterwards, *Having made the way to the Text as smooth and plain as any thing, with a Preface perhaps from Adam,* &c. p. 64, & 66. by which it seems to me that our very Prefacings are slighted and meanly spoken of. Some men would have brought you twenty Authors and more, to prove the Convenience of this manner of beginning our Sermons, and would have concluded with the Example of *Saint Luke*. But I onely say, that it is a more then I understand, why a Preface may not do as well in the *common Method of Preaching*, as it does in the *common Method of other Oratory*. And I dare be bold to promise for you, that if our generall

Custom were to begin thus. *The Doctrine that is plainly contain'd in these words, is this, &c.* you would make your self more merry with that Method, than you do with this. Indeed, Sir, I think what course soever we take, you would find fault with us. But it is a certain sort of Prefaces at which you carp. *It is a great chance if first of all we do not make our Text like somewhat, p. 64.* And is it not a sufficient Answer to say, *It is a great chance if we do?* For every *may be* hath a *may not be*. I know a Minister who tells me, he is not so idle as to look over all his Notes for this purpose; yet he doth not call to mind, that in five hundred Sermons and above which he hath by him, he hath two beginnings with such a kind of Preface. But if our Text be indeed like any thing, why is it absurd to say it is so? *And now methinks my Text like an Ingenious Picture, looks upon all here present, &c. p. 65.* And what great harm, I pray, Sir, in all this? If such a thing as this make us despised, it is because men have a mind to despise us. Methinks, Sir, your Letter like a *disingenuous*

nious Squint, looks with an evil eye upon every thing we do, and you seek occasions to undervalue us. What unhandfomenesse is there, if while I am prefacing to such a Text as this, *Tribulation and anguish to every soul of man that doth evil, &c.* I should say, My Text is like the Hand-writing upon the wall, that made *Belsazzar* tremble. Or if I should signifie my good wishes that the words of my Text may be as *goads and as nails fasten'd by the Masters of Assemblies*, that they may make some impression upon my Hearers. Would you not count this an harsh Comparison? It is well *Solomon* was a Wise man, who before us made such a Comparison of the words of the Wife. Other likenesses may be as excusable as as these, though I do not say that all are. Nor is it so strange a thing, that a Text towards the end of the Bible, should have a Preface from *Adam*; for there is a great affinity between the *Old Testament* and the *New*: And divers Texts in the *New Testament* do plainly refer to the *First Adam*. But be the Preface what it will, *you are sufficiently*

ently resolv'd to laugh at it. If I am over-venturous in so saying, it is you, Sir, that set me the Example, who conclude, that the Preacher, whatever his Text had been, was sufficiently resolv'd to make it like an Ingenious Picture.

You follow us to the *Dividing* of our *Texts*, and there you find better sport. Whereas if you were a *Pythagorean* that abominated that which recedes from Unity; it is hard for us in this case to make use of any manner of speaking so innocent, but you will account it to our disadvantage. Though it be the *Nature* of a Proposition to consist of a *Subject* and a *Predicate*, yet you will not give us leave to say that the words *naturally fall asunder*. It is but rarely that our *Texts drop and melt asunder*, now and then it may be in a great thaw: And peradventure if we had not an unexceptionable President, you would laugh at us for saying, *Our Doctrine drops as the rain, and distills as the dew*. Nor is it any thing more strange that our Text should sometimes *unwist*, than that a Proposition should be a *Complex Theam*. Yea, what if they

they divide themselves? For why may not *words* divide themselves as well as things speak? and who ever abus'd an Oratour, for saying in a plain case, *Res ipsa loquitur*? Sir, these are but forms of speaking, no more ridiculous then forms of Law, or Customary Expressions and Transitions in *Latine* Orations. Not that I take upon me to excuse all we do in this case: You have mention'd some things unhappy enough, but if you had pleas'd to have done us a *kindness* (if it be not *right*, you might have omitted making such general Reflections upon all the *Divisions* we make; and you may charitably believe that sometimes we shew as good *Logick* in dividing a Text, as any your Tutor read to you at the University. If we should not divide our Texts at all, what then? Would you not tell us, that we amuse our people with confused immethodicall Discourses? Certainly you would have as much reason for it. Wherefore again it is our unhappiness to fall into the hands of so witty a Gentleman, who what course soever we take, will find fault with us.

You

You have taken too much notice of our Ignorance to believe, that we can raise any very cunning Doctrines and Observations; yet the truth is, we please our selves sometimes in thinking we do so. I shall not trouble you with excuses for those stories you have instanced in, (though I am not altogether so ignorant, as not to know that somewhat may be said in excuse for some of them) now that you have so friendly admonished us, I hope we shall mend for the time to come. But if you please, we will a little debate another point.

Whether or no we do ill, although it be in our Countrey Churches to sprinkle a little *Latine* and *Greek* sometimes about our Sermons. I am not fit to judge which is the best manner of the two, to preach nothing but *English*, or to mix now and then a *Latine* Sentence. Old Mr. *Dod* I have been told, used to say, So much *Latine*, so much *Flesh* in a Sermon; but all men are not altogether of that mind. If I must determine any thing, I would say they are both best. There may be
rea-

reasons why it may be sometimes best to do so, and sometimes best otherwise. It is enough if I can give any reasons, that may make it allowable, at least so far as that we do not make our selves ridiculous in so doing.

And first, Sir, you your self have furnished us with one reason. If we may judge of others of your quality by your self, we may conclude, there is a number of Gentlemen in *England* of great parts, that have a mean opinion of us Ministers, because of our great Ignorance; wherefore why may we not be allowed now and then (not often, for you shall very rarely finde that we bring in *twenty Poets and Philosophers into an hours talk*, and that we spread *our selves in abundance of Greek and Latine*) to discover a little of that Learning that we have, that we may not be counted more ignorant than indeed we are. Now we finde how the world goes, that our Credit is low, why may you not judge, that what we do, is not for *simple phantastick Glory*, but rather for the preserving our Reputation among those who are ready to lessen it.

If

If there were nothing else in it, yet is not this something? Our Learning is not great, but we are abused; and they who do not love us, suppose it to be less then it is; therefore it stands us in hand to make the best of our own case, when others represent it to the worst. But this is not all.

There is you know in some words, and in some Sentences, a certain significance and fulness of sense in one Language, which cannot so easily nor so shortly be exprest in another; such as are many happily-compounded words in *Plutarch*, and many Proverbs and wise Sayings in both Languages. Now if there be but one or two Scholars in the Church, yet we may hereby convey somewhat to their Understandings with a greater clearness and perspicuity, then if we were all in our own Language. Or if no body in the Congregation look so like a Scholar as our poor selves, yet may we do our selves a kindness, by helping our own Understandings, and quickening our Memories as to some Notions, which after the Sentence of *Latine* or *Greek* is past, our
descant-

descantings upon may be as profitable to our hearers, as any part of our Sermon; but if we had no such thing in our Notes, we might lose some of the fulness of the sense, for want of preserving it in the Original Proverb.

And yet again it concerns us sometimes to let our people know what Authority we have for what we say. We give our opinion concerning the meaning of such a Text, and we confirm it by the Exposition of such a Learned man; or we endeavour to prove the lawfulness of some Usages in the Church from the Authority of some of the Fathers; or we have occasion to speak of the state of the Primitive Church while under Persecution; or else divers occasions offer themselves to take notice of Heathen Authours. The Doctrine of the Gospel, and the reasonableness of Christian Religion, and the equity of Moral Vertues are not new Inventions of this Age, they have been known and talkt of, and writ about many years ago: If now while we are quoting of an Authour for the confirmation of what we say, we quote him in his own language, though
our

our people do not understand it, till we English it, yet it is a satisfaction that we do not impose upon them. And I have heard mean people, and as to matters of Scholarship very ignorant, talk with a great deal of pleasure of St. *Austin* and other men, whom they have often heard of in the Pulpit, upon no other account, then because they have heard us quote somewhat considerable out of them.

Together with all this, it is a Consideration not altogether unworthy of those who do not think themselves the only wise men in the world, that many wise men have used this way of preaching; so wise and so modest withall, that it may be reasonably presumed, they have not out of *simple phantastick Glory* only spake a little *Latine* in the Pulpit, but they have judg'd it fit for them so to do.

These things I have offer'd, Sir, not much in my own defence; for I am not greatly guilty in this kind. It may be those of my Brethren who are given to this way, can give better reasons than I have suggested in their own Vindication; how-
ever

ever it seems to me that these are sufficient to deliver them from being despis'd upon this account, unless they be very lavish in this kind where there is little reason. For though I would say that this practice may sometimes and in some places be justifi'd, yet I am far from falling into the other extreme. You seem to condemn all mixtures of other Languages, I have excus'd some, and yet do acknowledge, that we may do very foolishly, in talking abundance of *Latine* to those who scarce understand plain *English*.

There is another thing you reproach us for, *viz.* The little Sentences we sometimes interpose to mollifie what we are about to say, *As it were*, and *as I may so say*, and *with Reverence be it spoken*; as if you thought we were the bolder to venture upon Blasphemy under the guard of these words. Blister'd be that Tongue that will be bold to blaspheme, whether it be with or without an excuse; and so far as we do in this manner usher in any thing of that nature, spare us not. But might you not have acknowledg'd, that we may very innocently use such forms of words as these? Do not good Oratours without any disparagement to themselves, often say, *Si ita loqui*

loqui liceat, and detur verbo venia, and the like? Why should this be more offensive in English than Latine. And is there not an Axiome in Divinity, (but may be you'll laugh at it, because Sylltematical Divines use it) Quæ Ss: Scriptura loquitur de Deo Ἀνθρωποπαῶς, debent intelligi Θεογενῶς. God himself speaks some things in his holy Word, which we may not repeat without Reverence. There are Similitudes not very harsh; but the infinite distance between the Almighty God and us sorry Creatures, requires as well an Awe in our Understandings, as the Reverence of our Bodies. But here also as well as elsewhere the fautes you finde with us are without any just limits, or any favourable acknowledgements, that such words are sometimes becomingly and well used, as well as unseemly and ill at other times.

When you had reckon'd up three things whereby we disparage our selves; *Harsh Metaphors, Childish Similitudes, and ill applied Tales,* and had tickled your spleen with the two first, you forgot to take notice of the third: Wherefore you may give me leave to follow your Example, and omit any discourse of the other two. But I will take so much notice of them, as to yield

yield to you, that many of the instances you give in these, as well as those that follow in the *Observations*, are sufficiently to the disrepute of those whom you quote for them. But if you had added many more to them, I do not see why it should be any more to the discredit of the Clergy in general, then why if two or three Plumb-sellers in *London* (a word you have taught me) should sell rotten Plumbs, all the Grocers in the City should thereby lose their Trade and their Credit. The Clergy-men in *England* are very numerous, and you have taken the liberty to look backward many years, ten or a dozen years to my knowledge, for some of the stories: Nay, there is one among the rest (that of *Abraham's* begetting *Isaac*) may be thirty or forty years old or more, for any thing I know; for it was superannuated and almost out of date above twenty years ago. And what if out of twenty or thirty years Sermons, may be rak't up twenty or thirty passages not very accurate or Scholarlike, why should the rest that are learned and grave and such as become men in our Capacities to Preach, suffer upon the account of those few. Especially if it be consider'd that the distempers and troubles of

the late times, did influence, as upon many of the Laity to make them poor, so upon many of the Clergy also to disturb their Studies. It is well known how many raw men and unexperien'd in this great Employment, skipt up without any controll into the Pulpit, without any sufficient *Order* for so doing. It does also deserve to be added, that you report things to their disadvantage: For those stories whereby you tell us how some men pick out cunning Texts to prove a Doctrine, which nobody would think were contained in it, I cannot think are so bad as you represent them. For if I may guess at the rest by one, you have done I doubt, some wrong to the memory of that witty man, (for I think I know who you mean) whose Text was about the multitude of thoughts, *Pf.* 94. Probably enough he might glance a little upon *Election* and *Reprobation*, for a man upon such a Text may wander far if he please; but that he took that Text on purpose to discourse upon that Argument, or that he rais'd that Doctrine thence, and did spend any considerable time to follow it, I much doubt, and have a great deal of reason to do so; for I may do it, without bringing any suspicion upon your integrity in

in citing of it. For though you would have it believ'd that he so said, yet I perceive those words, *The Doctrine that naturally flows from these words*, are not the Preachers words, but your own.

But I say no more in extenuation of any Extravagancies of Preachers, because in earnest I acknowledge that we are too often culpable, and the matter as well as manner of our Preaching might be to better purpose than it is, if we would take all due care to avoid those ridiculous Impertinencies, which though not so frequent as you suppose, yet are frequent enough to expose us to some Contempt among wise and understanding men.

Thus far, Sir, I have enquired whether all those things you charge us with, be indeed faults, or so great faults as to make us contemptible : It remains to consider whether we are guilty of some other things which you do reckon up and reproach us for, of which sort I enquire but into two. Whether we be guilty of accommodating our selves to the humour of the chief man of the Parish, without considering the necessities and capacities of our meaner people : And whether we be so idle as not to begin to study our Sermons

till Friday night, or Saturday, or it may be Sunday morning. You tell us (p. 41.) that sometimes we Preach out of Complement to the all-wise Patron, and all-understanding Justice of Peace, &c. and you know several of that disposition, who if they chance to have a man of Learning and Understanding more then the rest of the Parish, preach wholly at him, and level most of their discourses at his supposed capacity, and the rest of the good people shall have only a handsome gaze or view of the Parson. Truly, Sir, you may know more then I know; for I am an ignorant Minister, yet I hope you are mistaken in this Charge; I hope also you believe those Gentlemen are so wise and so honest, that if we should be disposed to humour them, they would civilly advise us to have regard to the rest of our Parish, as well as to them alone. And a little distinction may salve our Credit in this case. We may have respect to the Learning, when we have no respect to the Humours of those few Scholars that are our Auditours: So long as we go no farther than the first of these. we do nothing but what becomes us well, and what may be a great advantage to us in our Preaching. Give me leave, Sir, to tell you a story.

story. I knew a Learned Divine, who died within this seven years, that lived in an obscure corner of the Countrey; but where upon occasion, persons of better quality than his ordinary Parishioners did sometimes come: Wherefore to make sure work, he alwayes carried two Sermons with him to Church; and when he got into the Pulpit, and had looked round about him, if he found any strangers there, he would give them the more accurate Sermon; (and if he list'd he could preach with great accuracy) but if he observ'd none but his own Neighbours, he would content them with his ordinary way of Preaching, which was more homely and dry, but that which he thought was good enough for Farmers and Shepherds. Verily, Sir, it is a great temptation to us, when we know no body is like to hear us, but persons of an inferiour understanding as well as condition, to be more slight in our Preparations, and careless in our Studies; for if need be, we may think to put them off with an affectionate noise instead of substantial matter. But if there be but one or two persons of good Understanding, who either do or may come to Church, it is a restraint to us; We must for our Repu-

tations sake (which may be quickly lost) well consider what we intend to say. He was no fool that said, *Unus mihi pro populo* : One Gentleman in the Parish may espy more faultiness in our Sermons, than all the Parish beside. It concerns us therefore so far to preach to them, as to have some peculiar regard to their Learning; so as we may say nothing but what we apprehend fit for an intelligent person to hear. And while we are thus doing, we do not unworthily and crouchingly accommodate our selves to the *Gentleman with whom we hope to dine*. It is fitting for us to desire to approve our selves to an understanding Auditour; and we do without any shame own it, that we do so far stand in awe of a severe judgement, as that we believe our selves to preach the better, for having respect to what may be fit to say before such an one. Yea, I think it were happy for the Church, if all Countrey Ministers that live in by-holes, had a Gentleman of worth and parts in their Parish, not onely for the other favors which they may hope to receive from them, but upon this account, that our Sermons may be studied with more Care, and preach'd with less Exception. I am willing to hope this is that you mean
in

in your Charge; which if you do, we confess the fact, but deny the guilt. We have this regard to the better sort of persons in our Parish, and we are not blameable for it. But if you mean we have respect to the humours of the Gentlemen that hear us, as it is not proper for the place wherein you speak of it, so we hope we do not deserve to be charg'd with it, and till you better prove it, in our Vindication I take the liberty to deny it. But if you mean as probably you do, that we strive to preach learnedly, because of one or two learned men that hear us, when the rest of the people understand nothing: this also till it be better proved, may honestly be denied. We may have respect to their Understanding, upon the reason which I have already given, although we do not labour to rise above the capacity of our meaner Auditors.

With the same fineness you use in other cases, you bring us under a suspicion of preaching venturously and rawly, but very little premeditating what we intend to say. There are you say *very few Texts can be divided at soonest before Friday night, and some there are will never be divided, but upon Sunday morning, and that not very early;*
but

but either a little before they go, or in their going to Church, p. 85. And are we not then the more to be admir'd, that we preach so well as we do upon so short warning, and and with so slender Preparations? Is it not fitting you should recant one of the two? Either we are not so very *Ignorant*, or not so very *Idle* as you tell the world we are. If our Ignorance were so deplorable, and made us so contemptible, it is very strange we should be able to do any thing in the Pulpit at all, without a great deal of pains taking: But if this latter be true, that we do neglect our Studies, and spend but few thoughts upon our Texts before we preach, as if we did think and speak both together, it cannot be that we should be so dull and mean-parted, such poor Scholars, as to be upon that account the scorn of the world. How bravely might we do if we would study hard, who can upon a very few hours thoughts preach so well as commonly we do!

But, Sir, though I have supposed what if it should, yet I must not grant that it is true. We take more pains than you are aware of. For good Sir, how do you know the contrary. We are not worth your acquaintance sure. We are too Ignorant
and

and Poor, of too mean a condition to be fit company for so accomplisht a Gentleman, How come you to understand so well what we do, unless you would confirm the opinion of your travelling the Countrey, and searching like a Spie into the manner of our spending our time. It is a very hard thing to pronounce for the whole Clergy of *England*, that there are few of us who begin to make our Sermons before *Friday* night, (for our Prefaces are not so long, as that the dividing of our Texts comes far behind the beginning) and some not before *Sunday* morning. If you knew a few that do so, and from those few particulars would infer, that generally we all do so, that is no good Logick. You may read of *Dr. Hammond*, that by reason of his mighty parts and great reading, and his much thoughtfulness in the course of his Studies, he did compose the Sermons he preach'd in the Countrey with no great labour. And some few others who know their strength may be bold; and very possibly some that have less reason may be more confident, (because of a voluble Tongue) than becomes them, and may preach slightly. But that the greatest number of us take little or no time to study our Sermons, till you have better proved

proved it, (and *Affirmantis est probare*) I have the confidence to deny it. It may be many of us do not set our selves to write our Notes, till towards the end of the week; but we can study before we write, we may all the week long at several times be casting our thoughts upon our *Texts*, into a certain method, and digesting into some good order, what we intend first to write, and then to preach.

If you had been disposed to do us a kindness, and to deliver us from Contempt, you might have let this altogether alone; and if you did not think good to commend us for our Studiousness, yet you needed not have blamed us for that, which it is impossible you should have a certain knowledge of: for neither you nor any other man living can be so intimately acquainted with a matter of nine or ten thousand Preachers, (and such a number there is in *England*) as to know what time of the week they use to set themselves first to study their Sermons. You profess your self *an honest and hearty wisher*, that we might be well esteem'd in our Profession. You might if you had pleased, have contributed somewhat more then you have done to the success of those Wishes. You need not have repre-

represented every thing to our disadvantage. If there be faults in our Preaching, (as there are too many) you might have mollifi'd them somewhat without any dishonour to a Gentleman of your Quality and Wit; and you have a fair President for it, in one who was accounted a Wit in his time, and I think your modesty will allow him somewhat comparable to your self: The Excellent *Mr. Herbert* (who shall conclude this part of the trouble I give you) even when he could find fault with our Coar, speaks thus in our Defence.

*Judge not the Preacher, for he is thy Judge,
If thou mislike him thou conceiv'st him not;
God calleth Preaching folly, do not grudge
To pick out treasures from an earthen Pot.*

*The worst speaks something good, if all want
sense,*

God takes a Text, and preaches Patience.

*Jest not at Preachers language or expression,
How know'st thou but thy sins made him
miscarry?*

*Then turn thy faults and his, into confession,
God sent him whatsoere he be: O tarry*

*And love him for his Master, his condition,
Though it be ill, makes him no ill Physician.*

5. I have, Sir, but one Enquiry more to make, Whether if we are as you represent us, and are therefore despised; you have taken a probable course to heal our Wound, and to deliver us from that Contempt, which you profess your self sorry for, because we lye under. You seem to me to write after such a manner, as will increase our Contempt among those, who will do you the honour to have a favourable opinion of your Undertaking. Who ever thought that *Selden's History of Tythes* did the Clergy a great kindness, though it bear a fair face, and may have much truth in it? Or, there is another Book nearer a kin to yours, even that which is thought to give the provocation to *Selden*, (how truly I know not) who ever thought that the Comedy of *Ignoramus* would make the Lawyers speak better Latine, or increase their Credit. Such a kind of piece is your Letter of Enquiry, a piece of Drollery and Fancy, a merry making at our misfortunes. You pretend to pity us, but you do all the while laugh at us. Your Style is pungent, and enters a little too deep; It is a grave Subject you enquire into, and such as in sober sadness deserves to be enquired into; but the manner of your Enquiry is too facetious

cetious and jocular, and too like a *Pravari-*
cators speech, though in one place you fall
 so foul upon those Exercises of Wit in the
 Universities. I confess there is some oddes
 between a Sermon and a Letter; but as we
 take a Text, so you take a Theam to dis-
 course on, *The Grounds and Occasions of the*
Contempt of the Clergy; a weighty and
 serious Argument, if you had dealt with it
 accordingly. True it is that *Sportiveness*
 and *Drollery* is so much the humour of the
 times, that if you had written after an-
 other fashion, some hundred of Copies
 might have lain upon the Bookfellers hands.
 It may also be, that as

A Verse may find him who a Sermon flies.

So you may better laugh us out of what
 is indecorous, and administers Occasion to
 our Contempt, than if you made an Use of
 Reproof, and did severely chide us. But,
 Sir, after you have well consider'd the qua-
 lity of the persons who slight us, will you
 say plainly, which you think will first come
 to pass? Shall you sooner laugh us out of
 our Indecencies, or will you not much
 sooner laugh them into a greater dispositi-
 on of contemning us. You have, Sir, led
 the Dance, and so many as follow your
 Measures, will by your manner of speak-
 ing

ing be abundantly instructed to have us still more in derision. When we are in Gowns and Cassocks gravely habited, we hope to be respectfully treated from our Neighbours for our gravity sake: But you have drawn the Picture of a *Parson in querpo*, and devested us of all those things that were Ornamental about us, (nay verily you will hardly believe that we have Breeches under our Cassocks) that our people may more securely jeer at us. You blame us much for *harsh Metaphors*, and in the mean time you exceed as much in *over-reaching Hyperboles*. Either you expect your Reader should believe nothing you say, and then you play the *fool*, and write to no purpose, or you would have him believe all, and then you do little better than play the *knave*; for you very well know, the Relation you give whether of our *Ignorance* or *Poverty*, is exceedingly Hyperbolical; or you leave it to the discretion of your Reader to make more favourable allowances to your *Hyperbole's*, then you do to our *Metaphors*. But you should then have given them a better example, and not to have tempted them to say that which themselves do not believe: As I hope, Sir, you do not think us so ridiculous as you make us, whatever your

your reason may be for so doing. If you are of opinion, that *desperate Diseases must have desperate Remedies*, and therefore you somewhat overdo, because nothing else will cure us ; you may if you please try another course. When you see a fat Parsonage ready to incline to you , and in hopes of that take Holy Orders, get a Licence to be University Preacher. Then shew your Zeal, and do what you can to procure Honour and Reverence to the Clergy. Set up a running Lecture through the chief Market-Towns of a County or two ; and while you are preaching two or three Sermons in a place, invite all the Neighbour Ministers to hear you, set them a Copy after what manner they shall preach. As you have already told us where we do ill, so then shew us by your Example to do better. Turn out of the *Common Method of Preaching* : Make no *Prefaces* : Trouble not your self to *divide the Text*. Labour not for any *cunning Observations* or *Inferences*, which are the Practices whereby we make our selves ridiculous : But behave your self gravely and solemnly , and like a man that may not be asham'd to reprove others for their follies : It may be this may do more good than your *Letter*. If you care not to

take this trouble upon you, then stay a while before you abuse us any more. If ever you are like to become one of us, after a seven years Exercise in our Sacred Employment, review your own Sermons, and if you can find nothing that a severe Judgment or Critical Wit can find fault with, then and not till then abuse us at your pleasure: It is too late to say now, *Do not cast the first stone at us*, till you know whether your self be *without sin*. But if you persist in the same humour of despising us, peradventure it may be time to say then,

*Cum tu a pervideas oculis malè lippus inanis es,
Cur in amicorum vitiis tam cernis acutum.*

I wish I could confute that part of your Letter which concerns our *Poverty*: But (though you Hyperbolize grievously in that part of your Discourse) there is too much Truth in it to be contradicted. Yet upon farther consideration of the Matter, I find I can't be as good as my word. You are in too pleasant a vein for me to hit in with you. The Tune of *Alas poor Scholar* is too merry a Ditty. Instead of a pleasant new Tune, I think it may as well become you to fall in with me, and to acknowledge that as *poor Job* deserved better Com-

Comforters, so may the *poor despis'd Mini-*
sters expect, that to him that is *afflicted*, pity
 should be *showed* from his friend.

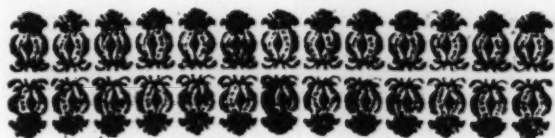
Sir, I have discours'd with you all this
 while as with a Stranger, and have very
 little betray'd that I have any knowledge of
 you; if I am not much mistaken, I know
 you well, and if I know you, I love you for
 old Acquaintance. But I have done that,
 which I think were well if other Writers
 would do in their Arguings with one an-
 other; not so much discover their know-
 ledge of the Person they undertake: for it
 often comes to pass, that when two men
 write one against another, the Cause is laid
 aside; and some personal quarrels taken up,
 in which their Readers are no more con-
 cern'd, than we are in all the Duels that
 are fought in *France*. If my Information
 fail, and I know you not, yet I honour you,
 because I am perswaded you mean well. I
 have done you no dishonour by any thing
 I have said; whether I have done any thing
 for the Honour of my Order, the Reader
 must judge. Glad shall I be if I can pre-
 serve my Brethren from being farther de-
 spis'd. I never counted my self, nor was
 any body else ever so foolish, as to count
 me witty; if I have now and then ventur'd

upon some ludicrous Expressions, it hath not been because my own Inclinations led me to them, but because in few words I thought, to answer such a Discourse as yours is altogether morosely and sowerly, would not do well. If I have not pleased you yet, I hope I shall in what I have yet to say; which is onely this: I put an End to the trouble I give you, and am

January 10.
1670.

Sir,
Your Humble Servant,

W. S.



A Postscript.

S I R,

YOU may see how hard it is for men to continue long in a good minde. I thought I had done, but the toy took me to read over your Letter once again, and I finde upon a Review, that I have omitted some things which do as well deserve to be consider'd, as many of those which I have taken notice of. I am not of the humour that *my Lord Verulam* reports some persons to be of, who when they write Letters, reserve the most important business for the *Postscript*. The main things I designed I have dispatcht, but some slipt from me: Which I say, because I would neither have you nor my Readers think, that by vertue of an old

F 3

Maxim,

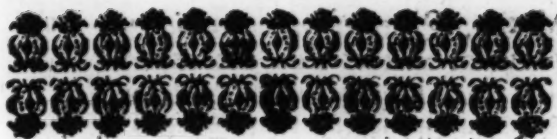
upon some ludicrous Expressions, it hath not been because my own Inclinations led me to them, but because in few words I thought, to answer such a Discourse as yours is altogether morosely and sowerly, would not do well. If I have not pleased you yet, I hope I shall in what I have yet to say; which is onely this: I put an End to the trouble I give you, and am

January 10.
1670.

Sir,
Your Humble Servant,

W. S.

A



A Postscript;

S I R,



You may see how hard
 it is for men to conti-
 nue long in a good
 minde. I thought I
 had done, but the toy
 took me to read over
 your Letter once a-
 gain, and I finde upon a Review, that I
 have omitted some things which do as well
 deserve to be consider'd, as many of
 those which I have taken notice of. I am
 not of the humour that *my Lord Verulam*
 reports some persons to be of, who when
 they write Letters, reserve the most im-
 portant business for the *Postscript*. The
 main things I designed I have dispatcht,
 but some slip from me: Which I say, be-
 cause I would neither have you nor my
 Readers think, that by vertue of an old

F 3

Maxim,

Maxim, *Qui tacet consentire videtur*, I approve of all that I do not expressly disallow; and having said so, I am willing to save you the labour of following me in a long reckoning up of all those things I mean. I trouble you with a little Animadversion upon one Paragraph of your Letter. That is p. 19 where you reflect upon the Gentleman that keeps Chaplains. It is not, Sir, to be denied, but some of them may be a little too servilely and unhand somely dealt with. But I wish you had spoken a little more respectfully and civilly both of those Gentlemen and their Chaplains too, for these Reasons.

There are many Gentlemen will not trouble themselves with so idle a Piece of Household stuff as a Chaplain is; none of the Family can be better spared, no Expences be better retrenched, than that needless Wages which he receives. Now, Sir, if there be any of the Gentry of *England* so inclinable to Debauchery, as that the presence of a Chaplain would be burdensome to them, and therefore they chuse to be without: you cannot but think you would have pleased many men, if you had spoken a little honourably of that kind of life; and you

you might have encouraged the Gentry to believe that a Chaplain would not devour so much of their Estates as a pack of Dogs will. And if you had done the Church no service in bespeaking such provision for young Scholars, yet you might have done somewhat to the Commonwealth, in being an instrument to recover the Gentry from some of their Excesses. You have taught them to despise us, and you cannot but believe, that what we say will be little effectual; but if a Gentleman of so great Ingenuity and so admirable Parts as your self, should tell them; it would be for the Honour of their Name and House, for the Encouragement of Learning and Piety, to have in their Houses some young Scholars of rare Parts and good Improvements, they might listen to you, and you might thus do the world good service.

Or if you had not thought it worth your while to have made this attempt, yet at least you might have acknowledged, that there are some Gentlemen in *England* (how few soever, who treat their Chaplains with all fair and good respect; who make them much their Companions and Friends; who retain them upon no low and mean accounts, but for excellent purposes, viz.

Maxim, *Qui tacet consentire videtur*, I approve of all that I do not expressly disallow; and having said so, I am willing to save you the labour of following me in a long reckoning up of all those things I mean. I trouble you with a little Animadversion upon one Paragraph of your Letter. That is p. 19 where you reflect upon the Gentleman that keeps Chaplains. It is not, Sir, to be denied, but some of them may be a little too servilely and unhand somely dealt with. But I wish you had spoken a little more respectfully and civilly both of those Gentlemen and their Chaplains too, for these Reasons.

There are many Gentlemen will not trouble themselves with so idle a Piece of Householdstuff as a Chaplain is; none of the Family can be better spared, no Expences be better retrenched, than that needless Wages which he receives. Now, Sir, if there be any of the Gentry of *England* so inclinable to Debauchery, as that the presence of a Chaplain would be burdensome to them, and therefore they chuse to be without; you cannot but think you would have pleased many men, if you had spoken a little honourably of that kind of life; and
you

you might have encouraged the Gentry to believe that a Chaplain would not devour so much of their Estates as a pack of Dogs will. And if you had done the Church no service in bespeaking such provision for young Scholars, yet you might have done somewhat to the Commonwealth, in being an instrument to recover the Gentry from some of their Excesses. You have taught them to despise us, and you cannot but believe, that what we say will be little effectual; but if a Gentleman of so great Ingenuity and so admirable Parts as your self, should tell them; it would be for the Honour of their Name and House, for the Encouragement of Learning and Piety, to have in their Houses some young Scholars of rare Parts and good Improvements, they might listen to you, and you might thus do the world good service.

Or if you had not thought it worth your while to have made this attempt, yet at least you might have acknowledged, that there are some Gentlemen in *England* (how few soever, who treat their Chaplains with all fair and good respect; who make them much their Companions and Friends; who retain them upon no low and mean accounts, but for excellent purposes, *viz.*

That the Exercises of Piety in their Families may be perform'd with Gravity and Devotion, as becomes such holy Services : And collateral to this, that they may have the opportunity and satisfaction, of training up Divines for more publick Service afterwards. When if it shall happen, that they live to see them well fixed in that Sacred Employment, the Cure of Souls ; it cannot but be a great Contentment and Pleasure to them to reflect upon what is past , and say , There is such a Worthy Divine who was forc'd to leave the *University* very young, and if I had not taken him into my Family, and given him Leisure and Encouragement to follow his Studies, he might have hunted after a poor Curateship as soon as he was Batchelour of Arts ; where a Constant Employment so soon , would have spoil'd his Growth in Learning , that he should never have reach't that Repute he now lives in.

Neither , Sir , have every one of these Gentlemen, a *Cozen Abigail* to dispose of ; or if they had, it is to be hoped they detest that *Symony* that goes under you know what opprobrious name.

You may, Sir, fancy those of our Profession to be a Company of sneaking low-spirite

spirited men, who know not what belongs to Honour and Reputation; and therefore you may deal with *us* as you please: But you might have remembred that *Gentlemen* are very tender in that point; if they should chance to enter the lists with you, you would finde their *Pens* as sharp in this kinde of *Duel*, as their *Swords* are in others. We may write languidly and dully, and the *Offers* that we make may not come home, but they are able to make sharp *thrusts*, and to wound your Reputation, it may be as much as you have done ours. I do not unsay what I have said, you may be company fit for them, and they may commend you for your Wit, yet chastise you also for using it upon them. You have heard of the Answer that *Dr. Jagon* of old gave to a knavish Lad of *Bennet Colledge*.

*Knew but I the Lad that writ
These Verses in a bravery,
I would commend him for his Wit,
But whip him for his Knavery.*

You despise us as if we were not your match; wherefore we turn you over to some who are able to pay you in your own Coyn, and to deal with you at your own Weapon.

I

I am sorry I trespass upon your Patience, for I am longer than I thought to have been; I have but a word more, and so conclude. (You see, Sir, how naturally we fall into our old Road, this should have belong'd to my Sermon, which I have almost finish'd for next *Sunday*, but now 'tis here let it go) If you have no respect to the Gentleman, yet have some pity for the Chaplain. Do you know of never a Tutor in the University, that would be willing to prefer a poor Scholar (after he hath taken his first Degree) to some good Gentlemans house, and do you not believe it would be a good refuge and convenience to him. Nay, Sir, say, might it not be as probable a remedy to deliver the Clergy from Contempt, as any you have pointed at in all your *Letter*; if Gentlemen were commonly so well dispos'd, to entertain and accommodate some who design for Divinity, but are disappointed of their Expectations, and disabled from staying seven years or longer at the University. Surely the greatest part of those who prove mean Preachers, upon no other account so much, as because they begin too soon, would do the Church more Service, and the Clergy more Honour, if they had such a convenient Resting-place
between

(91)

between the University and the Pulpit.

But, Sir, I never was a Chaplain, therefore I leave this Point to be debated by those who have greater Experience in this Matter. And once more I am

January 17.

Your humble Servant.

FINIS.



*Books lately Printed, and Sold by Nath.
Ranew, and Jonathan Robinson, at
the Kings Arms in St. Pauls Church-
Yard.*

THe famous History of the Jews. By
Josephus, in folio, Price bound 18s.

A *Body of Divinity*, or the Sum and Sub-
stance of *Christian Religion*, Methodically
and familiarly handled; By the most Reve-
rend *James Usher*, late Archbishop of *Ar-
magh*. Whereunto is added *Immanuel*, or
the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son
of God, by the same Authour. Price
bound 8s.

An excellent Treatise of *Wisdom*, in
three Books.

The first Book teacheth the knowledge of
our selves, and our humane condition, which
is the foundation of *Wisdom*, by five prin-
cipal Considerations of Man.

The second containeth the principal
Rules of *Wisdom*, the priviledges and pro-
per qualities of a wise man.

The third discourses of the four Moral
Vertues, and setteth down particular In-
structions how a man shall behave himself
wisely in all times, estates, and conditions.
Price bound 6s.

Solitude

(6)

...and the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...

21711

*Books lately Printed, and Sold by Nath.
Ranew, and Jonathan Robinson, at
the Kings Arms in St. Pauls Church-
Yard.*

THe famous History of the Jews. By
Josephus, in folio, Price bound 18s.

A Body of Divinity, or the Sum and Sub-
stance of *Christian Religion*, Methodically
and familiarly handled; By the most Reve-
rend *James Usher*, late Archbishop of *Ar-
magh*. Whereunto is added *Immanuel*, or
the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son
of God, by the same Authour. Price
bound 8s.

An excellent Treatise of *Wisdom*, in
three Books.

The first Book teacheth the knowledge of
our selves, and our humane condition, which
is the foundation of *Wisdom*, by five prin-
cipal Considerations of Man.

The second containeth the principal
Rules of *Wisdom*, the priviledges and pro-
per qualities of a wise man.

The third discourses of the four Moral
Vertues, and setteth down particular In-
structions how a man shall behave himself
wisely in all times, estates, and conditions.
Price bound 6s.

Solitude

Solitude improved in Meditations upon
Divine Meditation, or a Treatise proving
the Duty, and demonstrating the Nature,
Excellency, and Necessity of divine Medi-
tations. By *N. Ranew*, Price bound 2s. 6d.

The Souls Ascension in the state of Se-
paration. By *Isaac Loeffs*, Price bound
1s.

The Sinfulness of Sin, and the Fulness of
Christ. By *William Bridge*, Price bound
6d.

Aesops Fables in English, with Cuts.
Price bound 2s.

A Synopsis of Quakerism, or a Collection
of the Fundamental Errors of the Qua-
kers. By *Thos. Danson*, Price 8d. bound.

Englands Improvement revived, or Di-
rections for the Improvement of Lands, ap-
proved by the Royal Society. By Captain
John Smith, Price bound 4s.

Cum multis aliis.

on
ng
re,
di-
6d.
Se-
ind

of
ind

uts.

ri-
na-

Di-
ap-
ain